

Abomey, located in southern Benin, was built in 1904 to house a maximum of 150 prisoners. These days, more than 1,000 are reportedly confined there.

It is common in prisons from Central America to Central Africa to Central Asia for inmates to be severely malnourished and to go for months without being able to wash. Many prisoners depend for survival on food brought to them by their relatives. In many countries individuals awaiting trial, young and old, are housed together with convicted, violent criminals.

Prisoners and other detainees in many countries are also routinely victimized by poorly trained, abusive guards, who are virtually unsupervised and unaccountable to any higher authority. Sexual abuse of men, women and children is common.

A government commission in Cameroon reported that an average of five prisoners die per month in a prison there, simply from lack of proper medical care. Inmates in many countries suffer from HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, in prisons with no medical records, where doctors do not enter. Prisoners intentionally cut or otherwise harm themselves in the hope of receiving medical attention for life-threatening illnesses. If and when they are released, they infect the local population.

A recent New York Times article described how in Zambia prisoners are punished by being stripped naked and held in solitary confinement in small, windowless cells, sometimes for days on end, in ankle-to-calf-high water contaminated with their own excrement. It is like something out of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, only worse because it is happening in the 21st Century.

But the article went on to describe how the Zambian Prison Service completed its own internal audit, appointed a new medical director and allowed human rights workers access to its facilities.

The bill Senator BROWNBACK and I are introducing seeks to provide incentives for those kinds of improvements. Our bill would do the following:

First, it calls attention to this long ignored problem. Most people know little if anything about what goes on inside foreign prisons, and many would prefer not to know.

Second, it sets forth minimum standards for the elimination of inhumane conditions in foreign prisons and other detention facilities, such as human waste facilities that are sanitary and accessible, and adequate ventilation, food, and safe drinking water.

Third, it requires the Secretary of State to report annually on those countries that receive United States assistance that do not meet minimum standards for the elimination of inhumane conditions but are making significant efforts to comply, and those that are not making such efforts.

Fourth, it encourages the Secretary and the Administrator of the U.S.

Agency for International Development to assist countries that are making significant efforts to eliminate inhumane conditions. And for those that are not, it requires the Secretary to enter into negotiations with such governments to eliminate inhumane conditions. It authorizes the Secretary and the Administrator to restructure, reprogram, or reduce assistance, or to furnish or deny U.S. visas to the officials of the government of such a country, if doing so would help achieve that goal.

The bill also provides for training of Foreign Service Officers, and creates a new full time equivalent Deputy Assistant Secretary position at the Department of State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to monitor foreign prison conditions, which has long been needed.

Finally, it authorizes the expenditure of funds to implement the bill.

Once enacted, the Foreign Prison Conditions Improvement Act of 2010 will help foreign governments ensure that prisoners in their countries are treated as any people deprived of their freedom should be—as human beings, with dignity, in safety, and provided the basic necessities of life.

In countries around the world, the United States is helping to reform justice systems and strengthen the rule of law. No justice system can claim to deliver justice if prisoners and other detainees are treated like animals, or worse. By helping to change attitudes, and showing how with relatively little money, conditions in a prison can be dramatically improved, we can help advance the cause of justice more broadly.

Millions of people around the world still look to the United States as a defender of justice. This bill will further that goal, and it reflects the best instincts of the American people.

This bill has already been endorsed by a wide range of groups, including the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, International Justice Mission, Open Society Policy Center, Penal Reform International, Prison Fellowship, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, National American Religious Liberty Association, United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Disciples Justice Action Network, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

An identical bill is being introduced today in the House of Representatives by Representatives WILLIAM DELAHUNT and JOSEPH PITTS, so this is a bipartisan, bicameral effort.

I want to thank Senator BROWNBACK, and his staff, who have been extremely helpful in the drafting and introduction of this bill. At a time when some people seem to get satisfaction from calling Washington broken, this is a tangible example of how two Senators, of different parties, whose political

views often differ, can work together in furtherance of a just cause.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 3801. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am proposing a needed adjustment to current eligibility requirements for children who receive health care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

CHAMPVA, established in 1973 within VA, provides health care services to dependents and survivors of certain veterans. CHAMPVA enrollment has grown steadily over the years and, as of fiscal year 2009, covers nearly 336,300 unique beneficiaries. Servicemembers continue to deploy and return home from Afghanistan and Iraq, and CHAMPVA plays a vital role in caring for veterans' loved ones.

Under the current law, a dependent child loses eligibility for CHAMPVA upon turning 18 years old, unless the child is enrolled in school on a full time basis. Also, after losing full-time status at school, or upon turning 23 years old, an eligible child of a veteran would lose eligibility.

With the passage earlier this year of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Public Law 111-148, many veterans' families have expressed concern regarding their own children's health care coverage. The PPACA contains a provision that extends health insurance coverage to dependent children until age 26. I believe it is only fair to afford children who are CHAMPVA beneficiaries the same eligibility as dependent children whose parents have private sector coverage. Though this Congress is in its final month, we need to open the discussion on this issue now so that, if we must wait until next year to act, we can do so quickly.

My hope in introducing this legislation is to ensure that CHAMPVA recipients, without regard to their type of coverage, student status, or other limitation, are eligible for health care coverage under their parent's plan in the same way as their peers. I urge my colleagues to support this necessary modification.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3801

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. INCREASE OF MAXIMUM AGE FOR CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAL CARE UNDER CHAMPVA PROGRAM.**

(a) INCREASE.—Subsection (c) of section 1781 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows: